



Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs

Tony Evers, Governor | Mary M. Kolar, Secretary

October 13, 2020

Dear Union Grove Members, Friends, and Family:

It is with great happiness that we are reaching out to you today. I am pleased to report that our Wisconsin Veterans Home at Union Grove does not have any cases of COVID-19 at this time. Furthermore, we have completed the required waiting period since the last confirmed COVID-19 cases, and we are now authorized to admit new Members and allow for visitors. We have also met the requirements of regulators in developing a plan for beginning safe visits between Members and loved ones.

So, yes, we are finally able to accept visitors. Of course, while we are so happy for our Members to be able to spend a little time in person with their loved ones, our absolute commitment must be to the safety and health of our Members and staff. We reserve the right to discontinue visits at the discretion of the Commandant or Director of Nursing if visits cannot be done safely.

Also, due to the continued high case rate of COVID-19 in Wisconsin and around the country, please understand that there are limits to this plan, there are risks, and there are requirements for each Member and visitor. Those limits and requirements are outlined in the plan below. Please understand that as we work into conducting visits, the opportunities to visit will be limited. To ensure we can have adequate staff to support the visits and provide required sanitation, visits will be limited to weekdays and business hours, with a maximum of three 30-minute visits per day.

We appreciate your patience as we have worked through the process for setting up these safe visits. We have reviewed the practices of other long-term care facilities and worked to ensure we are holding ourselves to the highest safety standards as recommended by Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and other public health and infectious disease control experts. No visits will be risk-free; however, we feel that the plan outlined below will allow us the opportunity to meet the needs of our families and Members while mitigating the risk of COVID-19 entering the campus.

We hope you will continue to be patient as we initiate visits. We understand how important it is for our Members – for both their physical and mental health – to be able to interact with loved ones. I hope that you will join with us in ensuring a smooth process and a positive experience for all.

Sincerely,

Diane Lynch
Homes Division Administrator



Union Grove Safe Visits Plan

Onsite In-Person visits

- **Member Participation**
 - To participate in in-person visit, the Member must not be confirmed positive or exhibiting signs or symptoms of COVID-19. Members in quarantine or observation period due to their admission or re-admission status are not eligible for visits.
 - Members with signs or symptoms of other communicable diseases such as, but not limited to, C. Diff, Influenza A or B, or Norovirus, will not be eligible for visits until they have been symptom-free for 24 hours.
 - The Member must wear a mask, as tolerated. Anyone medically unable to wear a mask will be required to maintain a safe 6-foot distance from visitors during their entire visit.
- **Conduct of Visits**
 - Visits will take place in the parlor adjacent to Boland Hall's entrance. All visits will be conducted only in this designated area only. Visitors will not be permitted in Member rooms and there will be no use of other public spaces outside of the Boland Hall parlor, including restrooms. (The parlor is specially outfitted with a HEPA air purifying filter system running at all times for the purpose of these visits.)
 - All visitors and Members **will be required to wear a mask** for the duration of the visit. The mask must cover both the mouth and nose. Masks will be provided by the facility if needed.
 - Visitors will be required to use the provided hand sanitizer upon entering and exiting the visiting area.
 - Only contact other than between the visitor and their specific Member is allowed. Efforts to eliminate contact between the visitor and other Members and staff will be made.
 - Staff will monitor for social distancing for Members who cannot wear masks and sanitized handholding. Members and families will be allowed a masked hug at the beginning and end of the visit.
 - No food or drink will be allowed during the visit.
 - Visitors will not be permitted to give gifts or packages to the Member. Please drop off any permissible items with staff.
 - Staff will sanitize the designated visitation area after each visit. Housekeeping staff will be responsible for cleaning all surfaces.
- **Scheduling Visits**
 - Beginning Monday, October 26th, all visits will be scheduled online via [Sign Up Genius](#). Family and friends can schedule appointments by accessing the app and choosing an available appointment time. Go to <http://bit.ly/UGVisits> to sign up.
 - Appointments will be scheduled on a first come, first serve basis, but may be adjusted to equitably disperse the limited opportunities among Members. You will only be allowed one visit during this initial period to allow all Members the opportunity to be visited. No visitors under the age of 18 and no pets will be allowed initially.
 - Individuals can schedule their visit at 10:00 a.m., 1:00 p.m., and 3:00 p.m. You will only be allowed one visit during this initial period to allow all Members the opportunity to be visited. Additional visits, and evening and weekend visits may be added once the process has proven successful.



Union Grove Safe Visits Plan

- **Screening Visitors**

- All visitors will be required to sign-in and be screened for COVID-19 to include a temperature check and screening questionnaire.
- Screening will also include an antigen POC (point of care) COVID-19 test performed at the facility. This is a rapid 15-minute test and can be self-performed with direction from Union Grove's monitor staff. Visitors are asked to arrive 20 minutes prior to the start of their visit to have this task completed. If the visitor does not pass the screening, they will not be allowed to visit that day and will not be able to visit until they are symptom free as outlined by the Centers for Disease Control or can produce two negative results taken more than 24 hours apart.
- Any visitor who has a positive COVID-19 test in the community **MUST** report these results to the facility for the safety of staff and Members. Visitors who have a positive COVID-19 test in the community following their visit to our Home must also report these results.

Scheduled Closed-Window Visits

- **Member Participation**

- All Members can participate as appropriate to their individual circumstances.

- **Conduct of Visits**

- Glass windows must remain closed.

- **Scheduling Visits**

- Family and friends can call the facility to schedule closed-window visits. This will allow staff to know when to have the Member ready and to have a staff Member in place if the Member needs assistance.
- Any number of window visits can take place at one time and multiple can take place during the same week.